175 Baangoni had to give up their plan to subjugate the Babembas. They turned towards Tabora. After their victory over the Baangoni, the Babemba on the other hand, carried the war into the territories of their cowardly neighbors, whom they subjugated and ruled with an [797] iron hand. When Mgr. Dupont came to the terrible kingdom of the Babemba for the first time, the tribe had established its rule over a territory which was twice the size of the present Vicarage. The neighboring tribes would tremble at the mere mention of the word [648] Babemba. Even today we can hear songs cursing the cruelty of the Babemba among the tribes of Tanganyika and Broken Hill.

161 The present population of the Babemba is about 100, 000. The wars of the past have decimated them.

181 The most outstanding characteristic of the Babemba is that they are a war-like tribe to the highest degree, dreaming only of pillage, battle, submission of neighboring tribes, imposition of overburdening tributes, expansion and aggrandizement of the kingdom, but all this by means of a civil and military organization which is indeed remark- [57] able. The Babemba are one of the most intelligent races of Africa. [94] They have an exceedingly rich language including more than 20, 000 ●[538] words; they have a literature of their own consisting of martial poetry, songs of all kinds, more than 1500 proverbs, several hundred riddles, about a thousand axioms, etc.; a treasure bequeathed by their ancestors

157 In mining centers the Babembas are known for their keenness [zeal], their polite manners, their respect for authority, and their spirit of initiative.

484 My picture would not be complete if I did not mention the fact that the Babemba of today are perhaps the greatest adventurers of Central Africa. You meet Babemba everywhere. There are Babemba in Zanzibar, Panda, Lindi, Bulawayo, in Broken Hill, the Belgian Congo, in Transvaal and on the Cape. The Mubemba does not find it difficult to move; he can take care of himself, and he is at home everywhere.

584 ENGAGEMENT [Kukobeka]: Engagement takes place at an early age, around ten or twelve years, when the young betrothed are not yet nubile [mabele tayalakula]. [21]

Consent: An emissary [Shibukombe], who does not belong to the clan of those who wish to become engaged, is chosen. He is a man who enjoys a certain amount of prestige in the village and can speak out

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

laborious and the product bitter to the taste. European salt is much better liked, but it is hard to get except in districts near white stores. In distant parts of the country both European and Mpika salt are used for barter, and the traveller will notice as he gets farther and farther away from civilization that the purchasing power of salt goes up and that of money goes down. The white man's carriers are given salt in part payment for their work so that they may buy their provisions with it, and women prefer it to any other form of payment for small services. I have often found that children would rather be given a little European salt than a sweet, and they eat it neat. At Katenda's village during a period of shortage (March 1933) some children, who had been living for some weeks chiefly on gourds, picked up grains of salt from the floor of my tent with moistened fingers. Their avid faces were striking.

The craving for salt is so strong that the word itself (*umucele*) has come to have figurative meanings. In proverbs and folk-tales the husband goes to fetch salt from distant places, and this represents the fulfilment of his duties as a husband. In the girls' initiation ceremony the woman who dresses up as a mock bridegroom at one stage of the ritual, carries an imitation lump of salt over her shoulder, and small pieces are included among the sacred objects (*mbusa*) presented to the girl during the rite. In the ceremonial of founding a chief's new village, salt, together with flour and meat, are buried in the foundations of the ruler's hut. Nowadays, too, the word *umucele* is sometimes used as a generic term for European goods as being the most highly valued of these. Two old women who came to live near Kasama because of the shopping facilities there, described their motive as, 'We came to lick a little of the white man's salt'.[1]

(*c*) *Meat*. The natives' longing for meat is also almost a craving. Meat and fish are considered the *umunani par excellence* and a special word *ubukashya* is used to describe the hunger for meat as distinct from other foods. The supply of game has probably always been inadequate in this area, but the situation is considerably worse to-day. I have noticed that natives returning from the copper field, however sceptical they may be of the other advantages of civilization, are all unanimous that 'It is fine to get so much meat.' In his own country it is no exaggeration to

[1] *Twaisoko kumyanga tumucele.*

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

instances. This is especially the case with the brother-sister relationship in which the emotional and legal bond is very close. A man calls his sister by a special term—*nkashi*—to distinguish her from his classificatory sister whom he calls *munyinane* (plur. *bamunyinane*). A woman calls her brother *ndume* as distinct from her classificatory brother, whom she refers to also as *munyinane*. Both usually speak of this relationship in what struck me as a specially sentimental tone of voice. Natives seem to take pleasure in describing the brother's duty to look after (*ukusunga*) his sister, and say as a reason for this obligation that 'the man and the woman were born together from the same womb'.[1] The relationship is the subject of many proverbs and folk-tales in which the brother and sister are represented as succouring each other. In daily life, the man is on easy terms with his sister, particularly in the case of the royal family, where the interests of the two are specially identical. In Bemba society where there is a very even balance between patrilineal and matrilineal kinship there are two possible legal guardians for a woman, her father, or her mother's brother. After her father's death her brother takes the latter's place if he is old enough. Otherwise the mother's brother will look after her. Either brother, or mother's brother, will protect her if her husband dies, and defend her interests, if necessary, during the latter's life.[2] In the old days it was apparently quite common for an elderly woman to return to her brother's village to settle there in her old age and this she was able to do even if her husband remained alive by providing one of the brother's daughters as a substitute wife—*mpokolishi*—in her place. Nowadays, besides the older women, younger women, widowed, divorced or deserted by husbands away at the mines, put themselves similarly under the protection of their elder brothers, and the phrase *Aya kuli ndume*—'she has gone to her brother'—signifies the return of the woman to her own matrilineal descent group.

The brother and sister also exert reciprocal rights over each other's children. In the old days the *nalume* had supreme power over his sister's son, and could even offer him as a slave in compensation for some irreparable injury he had committed to a

[1] *Bafyelwe pamo mumfumo kimo.*

[2] If the brother is younger than the sister the position is reversed and I have found a young man with no obvious male guardian alive, living at the elder sister's village, having contracted a marriage there at her suggestion.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

574 602 Grandchildren constantly arrive for long visits at the older couple's huts. Small children at weaning go to sleep with their maternal grandparents; when older they might travel a day or two's journey to stay with their father's people and may remain there for a month or more. Children with parents at the mines are also left very generally with their grandparents, usually maternal, and may live there until they are of marriageable age or after. They become the children of the household and the tie is probably more intimate with grandparents than it is with parents, and is certainly less subject to taboos. Children whose parents live in the village often eat with their grandmother for choice, just as they regularly sleep at her hut.

A housewife may also undertake to feed, temporarily or permanently, certain of her male kinsmen, if they are left widowers or are not yet married. This group includes her younger unmarried brothers and her sons. A son may always return to his mother's village if his wife dies or leaves him and he will be certain of a welcome. Men say that their wives often leave them at a time of famine and go home to their own people, but that a mother would never refuse to cook for her son. 'There is always food with the mother. Even if she has only a few ground-nuts left, she will fry them and give them to you,' a native put it to me. A woman has no legal obligation to feed her married son, since he belongs to his wife's local group, but the emotional attachment continues strong and a son will always be given preference if he returns to his mother's community.[1]

A woman will not regularly feed her father. There is a constrained and respectful attitude between them from the time of the girl's adolescence, but she will send him dishes 'for respect'. Her [603] grandfather, on the other hand, whether paternal or maternal, she is especially bound to look after. A man has technically preemptive rights to marry his granddaughter and often jokingly addresses her as his 'wife' when she is a child, whether he intends to marry her or not, and it is therefore considered fitting that she should feed him in his old age if he is left alone.

[538] [1] Many proverbs contrast the behaviour of the mother with that of other women, e.g. 'Rejoice that your mother is alive, the mother of your friend won't allow her food-rack to be touched.' *Sankata, noko acili pa, noko ua mubio tchatilwa pa luino*, or 'In a village where you have no mother, your work is to beg.' *Mu mushi umushili noko, no kupula, milimo.* Cf. *Dictionnaire Français-Chibemba*, L. Guillerme, 1920.

. 2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

853 demand, and conversely, his circle of close kinsfolk are those who never deny his requests for food. The Bemba mother suckles her baby whenever he crys, and as he grows older she never says 'No' as long as there is anything in the house which he can eat. To refuse to feed a child who is hungry is one of the worst possible crimes and the words 'To refuse porridge' (*ukutana bwali*) are usually uttered with a special note of disapproval in the voice. [538] Folk-tales describe with moral indignation the behaviour of the woman who denies a hungry child, and the infant is early aware of his rights with respect to food. Even babies are touchy in this matter and always on the look-out for offence. I have heard children of 8 or 10 burst out on to the veranda of a mother's or a grandmother's hut sobbing in a most heartfelt way: 'They have refused me porridge' (*bantana bwali*). Examination might prove that the child had merely had a slightly smaller portion of porridge than its fellow, but it felt the insult deeply apparently. I have seen an older girl flounce out of the house of an aunt using the same words, 'They have refused me porridge', when she had merely not been invited sufficiently heartily to join the evening meal. In the hunger season this phrase *bantana bwali* is constantly on fretful children's lips.

But this expectation of food is limited to a definite circle of relatives. Those households which the child describes as 'at our place' (*kumiesu*), i.e. chiefly those of his mother, her sisters, and his grandmother, are early distinguished, and I have often watched toddlers, starting on a slow and arduous progress from hut to hut, wherever they might expect to find dainties and knew they could take them without rebuke. Within this circle of relatives the child early realizes that he is only getting what is his due. The European 576 child brought up in the individual family expects to be fed by one or two people only, and knows that the others who entertain him are doing so by way of exception out of kindness. He is constantly taught to express gratitude to such individuals and this training begins so early that in most European languages there is some monosyllable such as 'ta' which the baby is taught to use when it cannot pronounce the more formal 'thank you' properly. The Bemba child on the other hand is at home in a far bigger circle of relatives and takes their help for granted. From any member of this wider ring of kinsmen he can count on support as his due. One native explained when I asked why a certain young man had

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

262 and during the recent locust scourge the villagers whose gardens escaped destruction complained that they were not really better off than their fellows for 'our people come and live with us or beg us for baskets of millet'. But within small limits there is a difference between one housewife and another in her successful management of her grain bin. For one thing, as has been described, she generally cooks roughly the same amount of food however many visitors arrive. The careful housewife also restricts her brewing of beer to necessary occasions, i.e. for a ceremony or a working party, unless she has plenty of millet. Further, there are certain 574 traditionally accepted ways by which she can avoid her tribal obligations. Within limits she can conceal her supplies. The [881] young girls at their initiation ceremonies are in fact taught to hide a little food for their husbands at night, 'to give him the thing which is put by in the dark at night', and I have often seen women take a pot of beer and conceal it in a friend's granary on the reported arrival of some elderly relative. To refuse hospitality with a pot of beer sitting on the hearth would be an impossible insult, but a bland assertion that 'Alas, Sir, we poor wretches (*ifwe balanda*)! We have not a thing to eat here' is sometimes necessary. This would not be done in the case of a near relative, but only with a more distant kinsman of a classificatory type, or one of the well-known 'cadgers' of the family.

576 Bemba etiquette is also on the side of the housewife, since children are taught from their earliest years never to ask for food except in a near relative's hut, and not to look around a hut or into a granary. In fact, one definition of a witch or a wizard (*umuloshi*) is a person who comes and sits in your house and says, 'I expect you are going to cook soon. What a fine lot of meat you have to-day', or 'I expect the beer will be ready this afternoon', or some such remark. The girl at an initiation ceremony I witnessed was [881 taught to sing a gesture song about a tortoise: -538]

Fulwe pa fyakwe
Aingishyo mukoshi
Mu ci fwembaka;

i.e. 'The tortoise in his own house puts in his neck under his shell' of which the moral is said to be: 'Don't be like the tortoise which shrinks its head into its shell when it is at home, but when it is abroad, (i.e. in somebody else's house) puts its head out and asks for things or peers around.'

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

802 a gap between it and the first two fingers stands for three, and the two pairs of fingers with a gap in between for four, while the closed fist represents five. The other numbers are indicated on the right hand, while figures above ten are represented by giving the ten sign with two closed fists and then starting to indicate the units again.

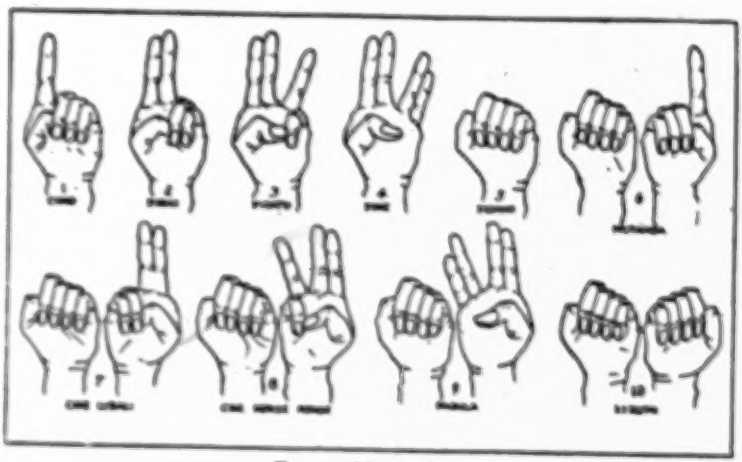

FIG. 4. Hand-signs.

The method of representing high numbers is thus exceedingly clumsy and any Bembá who have come in contact with Europeans have quickly adopted our system of counting.

In point of fact high numbers are not needed in ordinary Bemba life since the objects to be counted rarely exceed 20 in number, in distinction from the cattle-owning Bantu who reckon herds by the hundred and thousand. In fact the Bemba seem quite uninterested in big numbers as such. Their folk-tales, unlike those of a [538] number of primitive peoples, do not dwell on the hundreds of cattle, horses, wives, spears, &c., that the hero possesses, but merely on the difference between 'many' and 'big' and 'very many' or 'very big' expressed with great emphasis of the voice and a rising tone.

804 There are no definite units of length, weight, or capacity in this community. Though the Bemba are perfectly capable of measuring length accurately in such operations as house-building or furniture-making in which it is necessary to do so, they work by comparing the sizes of different objects such as two poles with a